

10-1987

## East Texas Colloquy

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### Recommended Citation

(1987) "East Texas Colloquy," *East Texas Historical Journal*: Vol. 25: Iss. 2, Article 15.

Available at: <http://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/ethj/vol25/iss2/15>

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## EAST TEXAS COLLOQUY

This issue, the reader will notice, is considerably larger than previous issues. This is because the Association is celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary and the Board of Directors felt it appropriate to do so with a special issue. The Fall Meeting, scheduled for September 25-26, 1987, will also call attention to this milestone. This writer must admit that after assuming editorial duties with the *Journal* in 1972 that there were moments when he was not sure whether he or the *Journal* would last this long. But here we are, fifteen years later, and so far neither has been able to kill the other.

How and why did it begin? F. Lee Lawrence, with the assistance of Dr. Ralph W. Steen, F.I. Tucker, and Dr. C.K. Chamberlain — the first editor of the *Journal* — and other charter members, did it because it needed to be done. As Lawrence stated in the first issue of the *Journal*, "The Organization of an association to foster and perpetuate the historical heritage of our beloved area is the realization of a dream shared by many East Texas historians." He pointed out that a previous version of the East Texas Historical Association, founded in 1929, had perished during the Depression, and although East Texas was the most historic section of the state, it lacked a regional historical association to provide a channel for the study of its history. He concluded his remarks with an expression of hope that East Texas historians' sense of fellowship and enthusiasm would enable them to maintain an organization to assist in the "preservation of the fascinating historical heritage of our beloved East Texas."

We are indebted to the leadership of Lawrence, Steen, Tucker, and Chamberlain, and all the others who have sustained the Association with their interest, effort, and money for a quarter of a century. We are especially indebted to Stephen F. Austin State University, especially Presidents Ralph W. Steen and William R. Johnson, for unwavering support the entire time.

So enjoy the *Journal*, come to the meetings in Nacogdoches and elsewhere in East Texas in the Spring, and help fulfill the hope — and the duty — to "preserve the fascinating historical heritage of our beloved East Texas."

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The Spring 1987 meeting was held in Marshall on February 20-21. We were hosted by East Texas Baptist University and the Harrison County Historical Commission. Seth Walton served as program chair and Gail Beil handled local arrangements. This was our largest Spring meeting to date, with over 150 members and guests in attendance at one time or another.

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The Fall meeting will be held in Nacogdoches on September 25-26. We will headquarter at the Ramada Inn. Information on the program

prepared by Dr. Joe Devine, Stephen F. Austin State University, will be included with the mailing of our *Journal*.

Please note that the Board has voted to institute an advanced registration process with the Fall meeting. We urge you to mail in your registration fee, dinner fees, and dues by September 1. This will guarantee you a plate at the meals, materials relative to the meeting, a fine reception, two journals for next year, and the good feeling that you are helping fulfill Lee's dream. Your tickets and registration badge will await your arrival. This will speed up the registration process and give us a more precise guess on how many meals to order. Of course, if you decide you can come at the last minute, by all means come on — we will do everything possible to accommodate you at late registration.

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The Winthrop College Archives in Rock Hill, South Carolina, has issued "A Guide to Family History Sources in the Winthrop College Archives," a comprehensive listing of 500 family surnames for which information is available. The guide is available for \$6, including postage. To order, write: Archives, Dacus Library, Winthrop College, Rock Hill, SC 29733.

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We are saddened by news of the death of two early leaders of the Association, Dr. Preston B. Williams and Cooper Kirby Ragan.

Dr. Williams, born in San Marcos, Texas, on June 10, 1918, earned his bachelor's degree and master's degree from North Texas State University in 1940 and 1941. During World War II he rose to the rank of captain in the U.S. Army and served in France and Germany. Dr. Williams taught in the Ector Public Schools prior to earning his doctorate at the University of Texas in 1950. He accepted a position at Lamar University in Beaumont that year, and taught there until his retirement in 1984. He served as the first chairman of the Department of History and Government and the first dean of the School of Liberal Arts at Lamar.

Cooper Ragan was born in Newton County in 1905. He was a member of the law firm of Ragan & Russell. Mr. Ragan served in the U.S. Navy during World War II as a lieutenant-commander in charge of LST 462 in the 7th Amphibious Force in the South Pacific. He served as president of the Texas State Historical Association and was a life member of the East Texas Historical Association. Ragan was a founder of the Houston Civil War Round Table and the Jefferson Davis Association.

This writer took five courses under Dr. Williams while a student at Lamar in the 1950s, and was the sometime guest of Mr. Ragan at the Houston Civil War Round Table and in his home in River Oaks in Houston. Both will be missed but remembered.